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International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 4 : A61B 17/42, 17/06, 17/04

A1

(11) International Publication Number: WO 90/03766

(43) International Publication Date: 19 April 1990 (19.04.90)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/AU89/00432

(22) International Filing Date: 4 October 1989 (04.10.89)

(30) Priority data:
PJ 0756 4 October 1988 (04.10.88) AU

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(81) Designated States: AT, AT (European patent), AU, BB, BE (European patent), BF (OAPI patent), BG, BJ (OAPI patent), BR, CF (OAPI patent), CG (OAPI patent), CH, CH (European patent), CM (OAPI patent), DE, DE (European patent), DK, FI, FR (European patent), GA (OAPI patent), GB, GB (European patent), HU, IT (European patent), JP, KP, KR, LK, LU, LU (European patent), MC, MG, ML (OAPI patent), MR (OAPI patent), MW, NL, NL (European patent), NO, RO, SD, SE, SE (European patent), SN (OAPI patent), SU, TD (OAPI patent), TG (OAPI patent), US.

Published
With international search report.

(54) Title: SURGICAL INSTRUMENT PROSTHESIS AND METHOD OF UTILISATION OF SUCH

(57) Abstract

A method of treating female incontinence comprising looping a filamentary element (19) between the wall of the vagina (16) and the rectus abdominis sheath in the anterior wall of the abdomen whereby it passes to each side of the urethra (20) into the correct spatial relationship to the pubis (17), allowing the development of scar tissue between the vaginal wall (16) and the rectus abdominis sheath and removing the filamentary element (19). A surgical instrument for use with the method comprises a surgical instrument for the application of a filamentary element (19) into the body for the purpose of treating female incontinence said instrument comprising a tubular shaft (11) having a handle (12) at one end and carried toward its other end a flexible needle element (13) slidably receivable in the shaft (11) and adapted at one end to receive a filamentary element (19) and having an enlarged profiled portion (15) at its other end whereby when the needle element (13) is received in the shaft (11) the other end of the needle element (13) defines a convergent surface of the other end of the shaft (11) and the one end of the needle element (13) is exposed at the one end of the shaft (11). A corrective tissue prosthesis for use with the method, comprising an elongate flexible filamentary element (19) to which tissue will not attach itself.